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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Romania

SUBJECT Soviet Control of Romanian Lumber/Qualities of Romanian Lumber/Consumers of Romanian Lumber/Lumber Consignments/Inadequate Supply of Lumber in Romania to Trade with West and Near East

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2. "Romanian lumber especially for construction, which is one of Rumania's richest resources, is controlled by the Soviets.

3. "There are seven qualities of Romanian lumber for construction:

- I quality, seasoned
- II quality, semi-seasoned
- III quality, Alexandrian type
- IV quality, Alexandrian type
- V quality, Syrian
- VI quality, planking ('cofragin')
- VII quality, for domestic consumption [could also be for use inside buildings]

4. "The first two qualities are sold together with no regard to length because they are for carpenters who need different lengths. Qualities III and IV mixed are also sold to Egypt and Greece. In the last few years, Egypt has been a customer, but only the Soviets sold Rumanian lumber because the Rumanians do not have these two qualities at their disposal. Before World War II, Greece was also a customer, and in accordance with the May 1954 trade agreement with Greece, negotiations are again underway to sell to Greece if the Soviets will agree. Quality IV and V are sold to Syria.

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5. "Since the Soviets have been in Romania, they have kept qualities I and II, and often III and IV, for themselves. The Romanian Communists can never sell these to other countries because their production is not their own. At first, the Soviets took the lumber as part of the 'war reparations', which was disastrous. Figured on the basis of the value of the dollar of 1938 and according to the prices on the world market, one cubic meter of lumber was valued at US\$38, UKL19, or 4 thousand lei in 1938; today the price is much higher.

6. "Today [1954] the Soviets no longer use the term 'war reparations' but 'trade agreements' between the USSR and the RPR. The first trade agreement of the series was made in 1947, but at that time the deliveries continued as war reparations. A Romanian-born lumber merchant, who lived and worked in Romania until 1949 and who carries on lumber trade with the RPR from Turkey where he now lives, sending ships to Constanta and dealing with the Romanian economic delegation in Istanbul, says he does not know when the Soviets ceased [sic] taking Romanian lumber under trade agreements and when the war reparations ceased. Officially, this change has not been announced because the facts are the same. In June 1954 the Soviets still had Romanian lumber at their disposal.

7. "The lumber is shipped in Romanian trains to Galati, Ungheni near Iasi on the Prut River, to Dorohoi north of Moldavia, and to Constanta on the Black Sea.

8. "The Soviets control the lumber production. The officers of the SOVRONMLEMN (Soviecto-Roumain-Bois, Soviet Romanian Lumber [Company]) in Bucharest are Soviets, and they control the sawmills in the mountains as well as the depots at important points on the railroads. The lumber merchant who worked in the large pine sawmills of Brezovit in the Carpathian Mountains, north of Ramnicu-Valea, on the Lotru River which flows into the Olt River, says this: 'From time to time a Soviet came there to supervise our work. He was usually rough, a soldier in uniform, or an uncivil civilian. He dealt directly with the chief of the union. A Romanian who spoke Russian accompanied him and translated his curses and threats. The Soviet was interested in production, the quality of the lumber, methods of production, and the employees. He was never satisfied with anything. He swore violently in Russian and in Romanian, and threatened us with prison and Siberia. We were always terrified. But as soon as he left, work went on as usual, as people used to work before the Soviets took control.'

9. "The Soviets always take the best lumber which is delivered to them at convenient points on the border. The lumber is also shipped to Odesa from Galati and Constanta. Until June 1954 the Soviets sold 30 thousand cubic meters of lumber to Turkey. It was average quality lumber for they did not sell qualities III, IV, and V. The Soviets removed 'Romania' from the lumber stacked in the depots in the Romanian ports so that the Turkish market would not realize that it was Romanian lumber. Sometimes the Soviets put on their initials. In the Corme d'Or warehouses in Istanbul the lumber was still completely or partially marked 'Romania', but if you asked the merchants about it they would answer that although they had bought it from the Soviets, it was Romanian lumber. It was the same kind of lumber that the Soviets delivered to Egypt, Syria, and lately, to Greece.

10. "Thus, the Communists in Bucharest have little [lumber] and that is of poor quality to offer to the Western world and especially to the Near East. Most of the Alexandria type - the production of which has been reduced, goes to the USSR; a very small part is sold to Egypt. At present the Bucharest Communists sell qualities V and VI under the name Romania (note: a mystery, since they are supposed to say RPR), Syria, and Mediterana to the Near East. All three qualities are planking ('cofraj + coffrage') for reinforced concrete construction. However, although the IV and V type planking can be used three or four times, type VI can be used twice at the most because it is not of lasting quality.

11. "The Hungarian sailors who went through Galati in May 1954 report that along the eastern quay of the port, there are large quantities of lumber for the Soviets. Their friends told them that all this lumber will be transported

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to Odessa in Soviet ships. It will then be sent to the Orient as Soviet lumber. The Rumanian people were aware of this, but shrugged their shoulders and sometimes insulted the armed Soviet soldiers as they guarded 'their wood'. At Constanta this type of activity is not going on on as wide a scale as in previous years; most of the Rumanian lumber destined for the USSR is sent to Galati and to certain border points in Moldavia.

12. "Their friends in Galati also said: 'We have no lumber ourselves. If we want to build, we have to ask permission of the Ministry of Forestry by way of the 'Sfatul Popular.' Permission is granted only to people in the government or to people who are in good favor. Then all construction is done very slowly, by the State, that is, the Party. There is a great cry for private homes for the workers, but there is not a single one in Galati. There is a shortage of all kinds of wood not only for building. During this terrible winter /1953-1954/, the lack of wood and food caused many people to freeze to death in Galati, and it is said that there were thousands of similar deaths throughout the country. In Galati there was not even enough wood for coffins to bury the dead. Many were buried in bags.'

13. "An emigre from the RPR, who has traveled a great deal in Transylvania to sell manufactured goods says: 'In July and August of 1951 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] they were building an arms factory in the western part of the city. The factory is located 1/2 kilometer from the national highway to Simeria, past the city park between the hills. The factory and lodgings for 300 workers were completed in 1952. Other workers come from the city or surrounding towns.

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